

What is claimed is:

1           1. A ride plate positioning mechanism for a personal watercraft having a craft body,  
2    an engine and a jet propeller driven by said engine, such that said personal watercraft is  
3    capable of being propelled by jet water generated by said jet propeller,  
4           said ride plate positioning mechanism comprising:  
5           a removable ride plate for defining a bottom portion of a stern of said craft body,  
6    said ride plate comprising a pair of integrally formed left and right positioning projections  
7    projecting upwardly at a front portion of said ride plate, said positioning projections having  
8    front faces for contacting said craft body; and  
9           a pair of left and right tab stops formed in said craft body of said watercraft, for  
10   contacting the front faces of said positioning projections.

1           2. The ride plate positioning mechanism of claim 1, wherein the ride plate further  
2    comprises an elevated arresting member extending outwardly at the front end thereof, for  
3    stabilizing placement on a support piece.

1           3. The ride plate positioning mechanism of claim 2, wherein the elevated arresting  
2 member is narrower than the widest part of said ride plate.

1           4. The ride plate positioning mechanism of claim 4, wherein said craft body  
2 comprises a stator and a dependent ridge which extends downwardly adjacent said stator, and  
3 wherein said projecting tabs fit nestingly between said tap stops and said dependent ridge.

1           5. The ride plate positioning mechanism of claim 1, wherein said ride plate includes  
2 side edge portions which are raised up in relation to adjoining portions of said ride plate.

1           6. The ride plate positioning mechanism of claim 5, wherein said craft body has an  
2 opening formed in said bottom portion of said stern with a pair of shallow, spaced apart  
3 stepped recesses formed at the sides of said opening to receive said side edge portions of said  
4 ride plate.

1           7. The ride plate positioning mechanism of claim 1, wherein said positioning  
2 projections have flattened front faces which are substantially vertically oriented.

1           8. The ride plate positioning mechanism of claim 1, wherein said positioning  
2     projections are constructed and arranged to have a substantially rectangular horizontal cross-  
3     sectional shape.

1           9. The ride plate positioning mechanism of claim 1, wherein said ride plate further  
2     comprises at least one raised rib extending transversely across an upper surface thereof  
3     behind said positioning projections.

1           10. The ride plate positioning mechanism of claim 9, wherein said ride plate has a  
2     plurality of spaced-apart raised ribs on said upper surface thereof.

1           11. A method of aligning a ride plate with a stern of a personal watercraft,  
2     comprising the steps of:  
3           placing opposed front corners of said ride plate between opposed stepped recesses  
4     formed in a bottom surface of a stern of said watercraft,  
5           sliding said ride plate forwardly until a pair of integrally formed left and right  
6     positioning projections on an upper front portion of said ride plate contact a pair of left and  
7     right tab stops formed in said watercraft stern.

1           12. The method of claim 11, further comprising a step of pivotally moving said ride  
2   plate until the side edges thereof fit into said stepped recesses.

1           13. The method of claim 11, further comprising a step of attaching said ride plate to  
2   said watercraft body with fasteners.

1           14. The method of claim 11, wherein said watercraft stern comprises a substantially  
2   vertical transverse wall face, and wherein said tab stops are formed as part of said  
3   substantially vertical transverse wall face.